

COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – May 27, 2021 at 3:00 pm
City Council Chambers

Committee Members:

Gene Merrill (Chair)
Bryan Hawkins (Vice Chair) - absent
Tripp Androy - absent
Shauna Bland
Sam Engel – by phone
Kenny Houck – late
Josie Molloy
Colene Martin
Cameron Camp- absent
Bob Schaller
Paul Lonquist
Kim Dickson – by phone
Casey Alderson – absent
Daniel Mancuso – by phone
Ruth Swain – by phone

Government Liaisons:

Susan Seereiter – Business Advocate – absent
Brad Clark – CD Director
Darin Fowler County Commissioner
Jean Ann Miles – City of Cave Junction
Curt Collins – City Council Liaison

Guests:

Marta Tarantsey – Business OR – by phone
Barbara Acosta-Hong – Hunter Communications
Michael Wynschenk – Hunter Communications
Scott Ackley – Hunter Communications
Kate Lasky – Josephine Community Library
Valerie Lovelace, City Councilor

1. **Roll Call:** Chair Merrill called meeting to order with quorum present.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. Approval of minutes from April 22, 2021

Motion

Member Martin moved and Member Bland seconded the motion to approve the minutes from April 22, 2021 as presented. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”:
Committee Members: Schaller, Martin, Bland, Dickson, Swain, Mancuso, Engel, Lonquist, Molloy and Chair Merrill. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None.
Absent: Members Alderson, Androy, Houck, Camp and Hawkins.
The motion passed.

4. **Work Session Items:**
 - a. **Hunter Communication Presentation**
 - Representatives from Hunter Communications shared a slide deck showing history of Hunter that started out as a construction company in 1994.
 - Built one of the first fiber optic municipal fiber networks in Ashland OR. in the early 2000's.
 - Investing income back into the company, in 2019 partnered with a private equity firm Grain Management which then purchased company in 2020.
 - Company footprint now from Eugene to Redding and is starting to invest in residential.
 - Hunter was recognized in 2020 by Broadband Now as having the fastest internet speeds.

- 75% of fiber goes through Hunter, serving Grants Pass since 2014 and now serving Cave Junction and Merlin area.
- Headquarters in Medford. Company only building fiber and all maintenance and design work is done in house.
- Oregon broadband as a state is lagging behind other states especially in rural Southern Oregon.
- Representatives provided maps to show where current fiber was located. The company's cabinets provide 100's of connections and are able to connect to pole lines.
- Hunter works with several internet service providers (ISP).
- Hunter is encouraging people to go to their website and type in address to show interest in connecting to fiber.
- Grants Pass time frame for residential expansion rollout starting in December 2021 based on need and can be escalated on interest, timing, and clusters.
- Opportunity for an on the job training/apprentice and workforce training partnerships. Looking for entry level recruitment.
- Hunter is partnering with Cavenet in Cave Junction.
- Importance of data capture to be eligible for federal and other types of funding.

b. Emergency Connectivity Fund Order

- Kate Lasky with Josephine Community Library shared having a great relationship with Hunter Communication.
- Opportunity to apply for emergency connectivity fund for libraries and schools has a very short timeline.
- E-Rate is different and is universal for schools and library foundations through FCC providing libraries and school affordable internet services and Josephine County qualifies for 90% of cost for building out broadband infrastructure.
- Schools have this opportunity, and this is a one-year cycle.
- There are several barriers and bureaucratic process to get these funds.
- The only way to do work is having a consultant who is from West Virginia.
- Library can "buy" hotspots and provide to low income residents internet access. This is a short-term fix.
- Kate mentioned Firstnet whose mission is to deploy, operate, maintain, and improve the first high-speed nationwide wireless broadband network to first responders.
- Library's "lane" is to provide basis internet training to end users. Library wants to partner with a company like UCAN for low income individuals.
- Library is doing a small build out in Williams.
- Library has an advantage of serving all low income not just youth.

6. Information Sharing:

a. Items from Committee Members

- Marta Tarantsey reminded the business community that the grant for operational and rental assistance is open now on the Business Oregon website.

b. Items from Councilors and Commissioner

- Valerie Lovelace mentioned the Airport funding from City and shared information about the Destination Marketing Organization and the full board has been identified.
- Jean Ann Miles shared that Fallen Fire Fighter fundraiser had a great turn out and handed out 250 crank radios provided by Pacific Power.
- Commissioner Fowler shared that the task force for ARPA funding will be meeting every Wednesday starting next week. The focus is how best to spend the money for COVID relief and infrastructure.
- Business aid available for the one-week shutdown is still open for applications through IVCDO and SOREDI.
- Pent up demand is out there.

c. Items from Staff

- Brad Clark shared that on City Council June 2nd meeting to authorize the City Manager to accept the American Rescue Plan funding.

7. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:

- a. Economic Recovery- American Rescue Act
- b. Youth Workforce Skills Development
- c. Spalding Update

8. Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 4:38 pm

Next scheduled meeting: June 22, 2021

Minutes prepared by Susan Seereiter, City Staff Liaison.